

DAP moves to censure Zahid over non-Malays patriotism remarks
Malaysianmirror.com
11 November 2010

KUALA LUMPUR - DAP MP for Ipoh Barat M. Kulasegaran filed for a RM10 salary cut motion to censure Defence Minister Zahid Hamidi for making insensitive statement in Parliament about the non-Malays reluctance to join the army.

The motion filed on Thursday was tentatively scheduled for Dec 13, before the debate on the Budget 2011 allocation for the Defence Ministry, The Star reported.

"Let me inform Zahid that his insensitive and baseless remarks in Parliament have hurt the feelings of the non-Malays," said Kulasegaran in a press conference at Parliament lobby.

Zahid has refuted claims that he was insensitive when he questioned the loyalty and integrity of the non-Malays, even as he came under more criticism from his Barisan Nasional colleagues.

He was reported to have said in Parliament on Tuesday that "a lack of patriotism" was a reason for the low number of non-Malay recruits in the armed forces, when he announced that Chinese and Indians each made up less than 1% of new recruits in the armed forces for the 2008/2009 session.

In his media statement Wednesday to clarify the matter, he said he had never made such statements nor intended to do so.

"What I had said was that it was possible that it could be due to several factors, including the sense of patriotism that is not strong enough.

"There was also a possibility that it was because of the fear of the strict discipline in the armed forces, less attractive pay compared to the private sector, lack of encouragement from family members, and various negative prejudices," he said.

Meanwhile, in Kota Kinabalu, Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said the Government had never questioned the patriotism of the people in the nation's diverse communities.

He said Zahid needed to explain his recent remarks and apologise if necessary.

"There could be many causes and the Defence Minister should give a detailed explanation about his statement," he said.

"As humans, we are like that. I, too, have expressed my apologies if I made a mistake in saying something.

"Once something is uttered, it is difficult to retract it," he added.

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